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imagery analysis report

# Operational Armored Vehicle Test Installation at Luoyang, China (S)

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## OPERATIONAL ARMORED VEHICLE TEST INSTALLATION AT LUOYANG, CHINA (S)

### INTRODUCTION

1. Activity at Luoyang Armor Vehicle Test Track and Range [ ] Figure 1) on [ ] suggested that the test facilities were operational and that armored vehicle production (possibly tank) is currently underway in the area. Although no armored vehicles were seen on imagery at the test track and range, a lowboy transporter capable of carrying an armored vehicle, a bus, and personnel were in the ordnance test area (Figure 2), and vehicle tracks were discernible on the test track. (S/WN)

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2. The test range was first observed under construction in 1979. By June 1982, it was in the final stages of construction. The test range may have been operational as early as December 1982, but incomplete coverage and poor image interpretability precluded an assessment at that time. This report contains one annotated map and two annotated photographs. (S/WN)

### DESCRIPTION

3. This test range, 2 nautical miles (nm) southwest of Luoyang, consists of a 5.2-nm-long vehicle test track and an ordnance test area. The track lacks the specialized test runs, such as hill climbs and suspension courses, usually observed at prototype development tracks. Although such features could later be added, the track, as it now appears, is intended for post-assembly testing of either wheeled or tracked armored vehicles. The ordnance test area is well secured and contains a ballistics, an armor penetration, and a machine gun test range (Figure 3). (S/WN)

4. The above-mentioned three ranges are similar to, but more extensive than, the ordnance test ranges at Baotou Armored Vehicle Test Area [ ], which tests the medium tanks and towed artillery produced at Baotou Armored Vehicle Plant 617 [ ] (The Baotou plant is the only confirmed medium tank production factory in China.) Both test facilities contain almost identical armor penetration ranges—the one at Baotou has an instrumentation stand not observed at Luoyang. At both ordnance test areas, the armor penetration ranges consist of a firing lane formed by two parallel revetments joined at one end by a target instrumentation/impact building, which is in turn rail-connected to an adjacent target support building. The other end of the firing lane is covered by an open-sided firing shelter, where the weapons to be tested are placed. The ballistics test ranges at both facilities are slightly

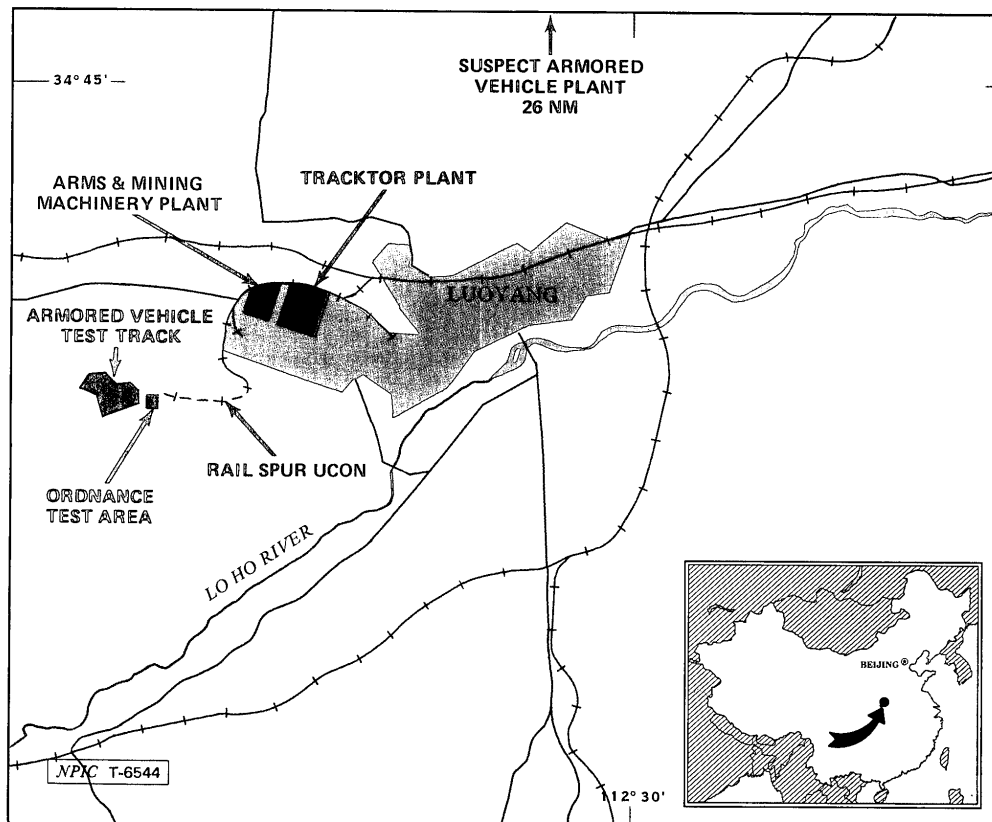
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FIGURE 1. LOCATION OF LUOYANG, CHINA

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different. The range at Luoyang consists of high parallel walls with a target instrumentation/impact building and an instrumentation point over the firing lane. The range at Baotou consists of two parallel revetments and no target instrumentation/impact building. The machine gun range at Luoyang has a target instrumentation/impact building that is not present at Baotou. Test range support facilities at Luoyang, which include engineering/maintenance, revetted ammunition storage, and fuze storage buildings, are more extensive than those at Baotou. (S/WN)

5. A new tank could possibly be produced at the Luoyang complex.<sup>1</sup> Facilities near the test range assessed as being capable of producing tanks are Luoyang Tractor Plant Dong Fang Hong [ ] 32 nm to the northeast, and Luoyang Arms and Mining Machinery Plant [ ] 2.6 nm to the northeast. A rail spur, which is nearly complete, will apparently connect both of these plants to the test range. Construction on the rail spur began in 1978, the year before the test range was first observed under construction. The rail spur extends to within 550 meters of the test range. (S/WN)

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6. A Department of State delegation visited the Luoyang Tractor Plant in August 1981 and reported that the plant appeared to be trying to double its output. A new casting shop and gear shop were operational, and a new foundry was nearly complete. It was assessed that the reported increase in production capability could have been intended for armored vehicles. Delegation members speculated that some of the production at this plant was military related.<sup>2</sup> (U)

7. Luoyang Arms and Mining Machinery Plant has been suspected of involvement in armored vehicle production since at least 1977, when one confirmed and one probable turret casting mold were observed outside the casting/foundry building. The presence of these molds suggested that a prototype armored vehicle was possibly produced there at that time. No other activity related to armored vehicle production, however, has been observed there since then. (S/WN)

8. Luoyang Suspect Armored Vehicle Plant NE [ ] 26 nm north of the test range, has also been considered a possible armored vehicle producer. It is unlikely, however, that this plant is associated with the new test range, because industrial facilities more suited to armored vehicle production are much closer to the test range. (S/WN)

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**Imagery Analyst's Comments**

9. Tank production capability at Luoyang, which is approximately 500 nm south-southeast of the Sino-Soviet border, would be consistent with the Chinese strategic industry dispersal program. Production facilities at Baotou are only 125 nm south of the Sino-Soviet border. (S/WN)

10. The Chinese are well aware of their need for a more modern tank. If a new tank is under development and is significantly different from the Type 69, conversion of the Baotou plant to accommodate its production would be an expensive project. For this reason, Baotou will probably continue to produce Type 69 and Type 69-2 tanks and spare parts for the older Type 59 tank. The production of the Type 69 tank is probably only a stopgap measure until a new tank design can be tested and produced, probably at Luoyang. (S/WN)

REFERENCES

**IMAGERY**

All applicable imagery through [ ] was used in the preparation of this report. (S/WN)

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**DOCUMENTS**

[ ]

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2. USLO Peking, A-790, Airgram, *Visit to the Luoyang Tungfanghung Tractor Factory by the NCUST Agricultural Machinery Delegation*, Aug 78 (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE)

\*Extracted information is classified [ ]

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[ ] East Asian Forces Division, Imagery Exploitation Group, NPIC, [ ]

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